

their kids and take care of their obligations. That is the foundation that built America. It is the foundation of the development of something that was called the "greatest generation."

That was the generation in the last century who served in World War II. All of us had an opportunity to get a college education when we otherwise would not have been near a college.

That built our country. That strengthened our foundation. Now we see people, Republicans, who want to make it tougher for people to make a living, tougher for people to get an education, tougher to provide heat for people who desperately need it in the wintertime, tougher to think ahead and say: You know what. I know my children will do better than I have done in my life.

That used to be a truism in our view of life in this country. We don't hear that much anymore because people are unsure, and it does not help to have the Republicans sticking up for the wealthiest among us and turning their backs on working-class families in this country, the middle-class families. It is not right.

I hope the people across this country will say: No. We are going to say no to these Republican policies. I hope our Republican colleagues will disband their millionaires' protection game, stop standing in the way, and start standing up for everyday Americans who need our help.

Help us continue the payroll tax cut for working families. Help us protect the programs that benefit the people who need them most. Help us, friends on the Republican side, to make America even stronger than it is today. We can do that.

Countries are failing all over the globe. America need not to do that. We just have to make sure that while we take care of our expenses, we also make sure we have the revenues to do the job.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. FRANKEN). The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. SHAHEEN). Without objection, it is so ordered.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

NOMINATION OF NORMAN L. EISEN TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE CZECH REPUBLIC

NOMINATION OF MARI CARMEN APONTE TO BE AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE REPUBLIC OF EL SALVADOR

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that we now proceed to executive session to consider Calendar Nos. 360 and 501, and I send two cloture motions to the desk.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered. The clerk will report the nominations.

The assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Norman L. Eisen, of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Czech Republic.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Norman L. Eisen, of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Czech Republic:

Harry Reid, Barbara Boxer, Patrick J. Leahy, Patty Murray, Richard J. Durbin, Kent Conrad, John D. Rockefeller IV, Jeff Bingaman, Tim Johnson, Daniel K. Inouye, Debbie Stabenow, Robert P. Casey, Jr., Max Baucus, Charles E. Schumer, John F. Kerry, Mark Udall, Michael F. Bennet.

The assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Mari Carmen Aponte, of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of El Salvador.

CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The cloture motion having been presented under rule XXII, the Chair directs the clerk to read the motion.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the Standing Rules of the Senate, do hereby move to bring to a close debate on the nomination of Mari Carmen Aponte, of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of El Salvador:

Harry Reid, John F. Kerry, Barbara Boxer, Patrick J. Leahy, Patty Murray, Richard J. Durbin, Kent Conrad, John D. Rockefeller IV, Jeff Bingaman, Tim Johnson, Robert Menendez, Daniel K. Inouye, Max Baucus, Charles E. Schumer, Mark Udall, Michael F. Bennet, Al Franken.

Mr. REID. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent the mandatory quorum under rule XXII be waived in each instance; that on Monday, December 12, at 4:30 p.m., the Senate proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations concurrently: Calendar No. 360 and Calendar No. 501; that there be 1 hour of debate, equally divided, in the usual form; that upon the use or yielding back of that time, the Senate proceed without interviewing action or debate to vote on Calendar No. 360; and that if cloture is invoked, the Senate immediately vote on confirmation of the nomination, and following disposition of Calendar No. 360, the Senate proceed to vote on cloture on Calendar No. 501; further, that if cloture is not invoked on Calendar No. 360, the Senate proceed to vote on cloture on Calendar No. 501; that any statements be printed in the RECORD, and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senate will resume legislative session.

TRIBUTE TO JACOB'S TREE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I rise today to extend my personal blessing this holiday season to the family of Jacob Akin of Somerset, Kentucky. This year, the town of Somerset has graciously chosen to honor the Akin family by accepting their donation of a 20-foot cherry spruce tree to be displayed in the town's Fountain Square as the county Christmas tree. More important, however, is the solemn but heart-warming story of the tree's origin, and the inspiration it brings to the people of the community.

The tree, known as "Jacob's Tree," was planted in remembrance of Jacob Akin, who was tragically killed in a terrible accident on December 6, 1994. Five-year-old Jacob was playing with his older brother, Abraham, in a house when a chimney unexpectedly collapsed on top of him. Thus, the holiday season each year is especially burdensome for his family, as it serves as a constant reminder of the horrific accident that took place 17 years ago.

A year after his death, his family decided to plant a tree to honor young Jacob. Over the years, the tree has helped bring comfort and peace to the family. "We decided to put up the tree in memory of my son," Jacob's mother, Rebecca Buis, says. "I felt like as the tree grew, I could keep up with the